

Amendment
Appln. No. 10/689,182
Page 5 of 7

REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the final Office Action mailed on December 29, 2005, in which claims 12-22 were pending. Claims 1-15 and 22 were rejected and claims 16-22 objected to. By this response claims 12 and 22 are amended. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 12-22 are requested.

Objection to Claim 22

Claim 22 was objected to on the basis of an informality involving antecedent basis. By this response claim 22 has been amended in the manner suggested in the Office Action. Withdrawal of the objection is requested.

§ 102 Rejection Based On Symons Patent

Claim 12 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by the Symons et al. U.S. Patent 5,886,857. Among other points, the element identified by reference numeral 50 in the patent is said to be a compliant locating feature. The applicant respectfully disagrees with this position.

The aperture 50 in the load beam shown in the Symons patent includes a plurality of notches 51 spaced about its perimeter edge. This aperture and its notches, in cooperation with an aperture 60 on the flexure, are used by optical measurement processes to provide an indication of the alignment of the flexure relative to the load beam. (See, e.g., col. 6, line 29 – col. 7, line 30). There is no teaching or suggestion that the aperture can function as a compliant locating feature in a method of the type claimed by the applicant.

By this response claim 12 is amended to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention, and to distinguish this invention from the Symons patent and other prior art of record. In particular, claim 12 now recites a method involving a compliant locating feature having spring beam tabs that are deflectable out of a major plane of the suspension component, and inserting a tapered pin into the opening and causing the pin to engage the

Amendment
Appln. No. 10/689,182
Page 6 of 7

tabs. A method having these features and associated advantages is neither taught nor suggested by the Symons patent. Withdrawal of the § 102 rejection based on this patent is therefore requested.

§ 102 Rejection Based On Holaway Patent

Claims 1-15 and 22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by the Holaway U.S. Patent 6,367,144. Among other points, the Office Action asserts that the compliant locating feature identified by reference numeral 250 has spring beam tabs spaced around an opening.

The compliant locating feature and method of the present invention are, however, considerably different than those disclosed in the Holaway patent. Specifically, in the Holaway patent the compliant locating feature is engaged by one side of a pin. The pin and compliant locating feature are then moved in a direction parallel to the longitudinal axis of the suspension component to provide the alignment function.

By this response, claim 12 is amended to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the applicant's invention, and to distinguish this invention from the Holaway patent and other prior art of record. In particular, claims 1-15 and 22 now recite a method that includes a compliant locating feature having spring beam tabs that are deflectable out of a major plane of the suspension component. A tapered pin is inserted into the locating feature and engages the spring beam tabs at at least three points spaced by an arc length extending through the three points that is greater than 180°. A method having these features and associated advantages is neither taught nor suggested by the Holaway patent. Withdrawal of the § 102 rejection based on this patent is therefore requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The indication of allowability of claims 16-21 if rewritten in independent form is appreciated. For the reasons set forth above, however, it is believed that these claims are allowable in their current form as presented.

Amendment
Appln. No. 10/689,182
Page 7 of 7

Interview Summary

The Interview Summary enclosed with the Office Action states that the undersigned attorney and Examiner Kim discussed a proposed amendment provided by the examiner. It is the undersigned attorney's recollection that the proposed amendment essentially incorporated claim 16 into claim 12. As noted in the summary, the applicant declined to accept the proposed amendment.

Conclusion

All pending claims 12-22 are now in condition for allowance. Notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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